

Every Breath You Take by EvieSmallwood

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Post Season 2, picks up exactly where we left off, snowball - Freeform

Language: English

Characters: All of the kids

Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven & Max (Stranger Things), Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Joyce Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Max/Lucas Sinclair, Will Byers & Eleven & Mike Wheeler & Dustin Henderson & Lucas Sinclair & Max

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-01

Updated: 2017-11-01

Packaged: 2022-04-02 01:53:48

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,128

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Max & El have to clear the air.

Every Breath You Take

“So... Eleven...”

They're standing by the bleachers, both hovering in some sort of post-kiss daze, hands holding empty cups which will soon be replaced with new ones from their... boyfriends? God, is Lucas her *boyfriend*, now?

El studies her, eyes not quite so intimidating without the dark makeup, but still piercing in a way Max can't quite comprehend; like she's reading her, or something.

“Do you like Lucas?”

The volume of her voice is low, but the edges of her tone are abrasive. Her eyes narrow. Max swallows, face maybe on fire. “I-I don't know. Kind of.”

“And you *don't* like Mike?”

At that, Max laughs. Him? “God, no! Not like *that*, anyway.” Sure, he's okay, but he was still an ass to her and he still won't tell her whether or not she's really in the party (though, these last few inquiries haven't exactly been met with a full-on ‘no’).

The tension seems to bleed out of Eleven like a deflating balloon. She smiles. It's the first time Max has really seen it since that night—but then, she hasn't seen much of this girl at all, even though the boys talk about her pretty much every day. The whole secret thing is getting a little annoying.

“That's good,” El says. “I thought maybe...”

“You were worried I like Mike?!” Max shakes her head. “No way. He's not exactly my type.”

“Who's not your type?”

Lucas's voice arrives from nowhere, tailed by Mike. He's holding two cups, one of which he hands to her, and his eyebrows are raised

speculatively. Max and El exchange glances. “No one,” they chorus.

The boys both frown, but Mike’s suspicion ebbs away within seconds. He hands El the fresh punch, seemingly gravitating toward her. It’s so weird, the way they seem to just lock on to one another, like they fit. Like they belong together. It’s advanced level romance, especially for kids their age.

Max drifts toward Lucas. He’s not even looking at her, but scanning the crowd of kids dancing to some bubbly pop song Max has never heard. They both spot Dustin and Will, and wave them over.

Immediately, with the six of them, it feels complete—just like it did that night. There are no missing pieces, there is no awkwardness, it’s just... right. Max is struck by the revelation that these are her *friends*. As if to solidify this realisation, El smiles at her over the rim of her red solo cup.

“How was that dance, then?” Max asks Will, teasing heavy in her tone.

Will blushes. “It was okay,” he says uneasily. “She’s just... not my type.”

Lucas huffs. “Seems like no one is anyone’s types.”

Max raises her eyebrows as she realises what he’s getting at. “Oh my *god*, Lucas, I wasn’t talking about you.”

“Oh thank God,” he clutches his chest, actually sinking down onto the lowest bleacher bench. “I was like... I thought things were going good...”

“They were,” she rolls her eyes. “Chill out.”

Dustin cracks his knuckles. “Well, I don’t know what kind of rejection you guys faced out there, but the ladies are totally into this,” he points to his ridiculous hairdo, grinning. It makes them all laugh, because they know it’s bullshit, but none of them are gonna say it.

“I need some air,” Max announces, in the way she’s seen her mom do when her friends come over for bridge games (in both of their cases,

'air' means a cigarette). She eyes El. "You wanna come?"

El glances at Mike, not necessarily for approval, more for his opinion. He shrugs. "It should be okay, I guess."

Max huffs. She grabs El by the hand and leads her through the crowd, occasionally having to push and shove. They break through eventually, emerging from the gym. The hallways are virtually empty, but just to be safe, Max pulls El a little farther. They stop by the water fountains. Max pulls her cigarette box out of her back pocket. She fingers one out and then offers the end to El. "Want one?"

El purses her lips, and just when Max thinks she's about to refuse, she reaches out and grabs one. Max lights them swiftly. They lean against the wall, which is blissfully cool compared to the hot, stuffy gym.

El takes a drag and then coughs. Max can't help but laughing. "First cigarette?"

She shakes her head. "Second," she says. "I don't like them much."

"Then why take one?"

El takes another, smaller drag before replying. "I want to be your friend," she says breathlessly.

"Well shit, El," Max grabs the cigarette out of her hand and throws it into the water fountain. "You don't have to kill yourself to be my friend. Besides, you already are, right?"

El swallows. "Right."

Max sighs. "Listen, the whole... ignoring me thing, that night... I'm not mad. I get it, now."

"I also made you fall off your skateboard," she says, all at once.

Max's eyes widen, and slowly her mouth turns upward into a grin. "*Seriously?!?*"

"Yes," El seems to curl into herself. "I'm sorry."

“Don’t be, that’s like... that’s *really* cool.”

“Hey! Assholes!”

They both round at the sound. “Mr. Jefferson,” Max breathes. He’s standing at the far end of the hall, hands on his hips, scowling at them. He looks so much like her stepdad it makes her heart race. She grabs El’s hand. “Go! Run!”

They bolt, rounding corners and pushing past other students (who look far too busy with each other to care), until they reach the front doors. Max breathes in the cool night air. She throws her cigarette down, and turns to El. “I think we lost him.”

El pulls her away from the doors just to be safe. They sag against the brick wall, sinking down to the ground.

“El?”

Their heads snap up, only to find Chief Hopper and Mrs. Byers. The chief is scowling a little, but there’s worry in his eyes. Max is used to asshole dads, but she’s pretty sure he’s not one of them.

“What are you doing out here?”

They exchange glances. “We needed air,” El says.

Mr. Jefferson chooses that exact moment to shoot out of the front doors. He spots them. “You! Smokers!”

“Shit!” Max jerks El to her feet. “Go! *Haul ass*, come on!”

They run, El shouting out some apology to the chief. Max goes down the side alley, stumbling through the dark, and finds the side doors to the gym. She pushes through, spotting the boys immediately. They’re huddled up in the corner of the gym. Max walks up to them. “Hey, guys.”

“You weren’t gone for long. How was the air?” Will asks.

“Good,” says El.

They both laugh. “Real good,” adds Max.

Author's Note:

Hope you all enjoyed, and happy November (I can't believe 2017 is almost over)!